

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

1-8. (Canceled)

9. (Currently Amended) A purification method for separating minicells from parent bacterial cells that comprises (a) providing a sample enriched for minicells, wherein said minicells are approximately 0.4 μm in diameter, (b) subjecting said sample to a condition selected from the group consisting of a stress-inducing osmotic condition, an anaerobic condition and a nutrient-limiting condition, which condition induces parent bacterial cells to adopt a filamentous form, and then (c) filtering said sample with at least one filter having a pore size of about 0.45 μm , such that minicells but not filamentous parent bacterial cells pass, ~~whereby said method yields a purified composition of minicells free of parent bacterial cells.~~

10. (Canceled)

11. (Original) A method according to claim 9, wherein said sample is incubated in a hypertonic medium.

12-26. (Canceled)

27. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 9, wherein the filtering step comprises cross-flow filtration.

28. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 9, wherein the filtering step comprises a serial filtration process that combines cross-flow filtration and dead-end filtration.

29. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 28, ~~wherein the filtering step employs further comprising, in step (d), filtering said sample with~~ at least one filter employing a pore size less than or equal to about 0.2 μm .

30. (Canceled)

31. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 28, wherein said serial filtration process is preceded by differential centrifugation.

32. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 9, **wherein the filtering step employs further comprising, in step (d), filtering said sample with** at least one filter employing a pore size less than or equal to about 0.2 μm .

33. (Canceled)

34. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 9, further comprising a step of subjecting the minicells to density gradient centrifugation in a biologically compatible medium.

35. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 34, further comprising a step of subjecting the minicells to differential centrifugation.

36. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 34, wherein said medium is isotonic and non-toxic.

37. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 34, wherein said medium consists essentially of iodixanol and water.

38. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 9, further comprising a step of treating said purified composition of minicells with an antibiotic.

39. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 9, further comprising a step of removing free endotoxin from said purified composition of minicells.

40. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 39, wherein said step of removing free endotoxin employs anti-Lipid A antibodies.

41. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 9, wherein the purified composition of minicells contains fewer than about 1 contaminating parent bacterial cell per 10^8 , 10^9 , 10^{10} or 10^{11} minicells.

42. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 9, wherein the purified composition of minicells contains fewer than about 1 contaminating parent bacterial cell per 10^9 minicells.

43. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 9, wherein the purified composition of minicells contains fewer than about 1 contaminating parent bacterial cell per 10^{10} minicells.

44. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 9, wherein the purified composition of minicells contains fewer than about 1 contaminating parent bacterial cell per 10^{11} minicells.

45 (New) A method according to claim 9, wherein said method yields a purified composition of minicells free of parent bacterial cells.